



Challenge, Equality & Opportunity

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Our Vision for Early Years

At Havannah First School, we greatly value the importance of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in providing a secure foundation for future learning and development. We firmly believe in giving our Reception children the best possible start to their school life. Our school family is nurturing and inclusive, where children feel happy, safe and valued. Our children are excited and motivated to learn through rich, engaging and challenging experiences. They develop skills through first-hand opportunities that encourage exploration, curiosity, creativity and appropriate risk-taking. We have high aspirations for all children and recognise that each child begins their learning journey from a different starting point. We plan carefully to meet children's individual needs and stages of development, ensuring that every child is supported to thrive and achieve their full potential. Through our teaching and learning, we promote school readiness by providing a broad range of knowledge, skills and experiences that lay the foundations for future success in school and beyond. Our vision is to create secure foundations that enable children to become independent, resilient and confident learners who are well prepared for the next stage of their education and are valued members of our school community.

Legislation

- EYFS Statutory Framework
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Equality Act 2010
- SEND Code of Practice

Aims

At Havannah First School, we aim to ensure that:

- We provide every child with a happy, secure and positive start to their school life, enabling them to establish strong foundations and develop a lifelong love of learning.
- All children are provided with secure foundations through learning and development opportunities that are carefully planned around their individual needs and interests, and are regularly assessed and reviewed. Children access a broad and balanced curriculum that provides the knowledge, skills and experiences needed for future learning and success in life.
- All children experience high-quality teaching and learning that promotes progress and enables them to achieve their full potential.
- We establish positive and effective partnerships between children, staff, parents and carers.
- Every child is valued, included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.

The Four Principles of the EYFS

The Early Years Foundation Stage is based upon four overarching principles:

- Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
- Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, where their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

Our Approach

At Havannah First School, we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all children, giving them a strong foundation for future learning, development and well-being. To put these principles into practice, we:

- Provide a broad and balanced curriculum that takes account of each child's stage of development, interests and individual needs.
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- Work in close partnership with parents and carers.
- Plan challenging and enjoyable learning experiences informed by careful observation and assessment.
- Provide a safe, secure, nurturing and inclusive learning environment where children feel valued and supported.
- Foster children's independence, resilience, curiosity and confidence through a play-based and engaging curriculum.

"When we give every child the best start in their early years, we give them what they need today. We also set them up with every chance of success tomorrow."

(Development Matters, 2021)

Structure of the EYFS

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception Year. Within Havannah First School, this policy relates to children in our Reception classes. Currently, there are 90 children across Reception, organised into three classes: Ladybird, Caterpillar and Honeybee. Each class has up to 30 children. The Reception team consists of three class teachers and several teaching assistants, who work collaboratively to support children's learning, development and well-being.

Children begin attending school on a part-time basis during the transition period (usually first week of September) and move to full-time attendance, usually by the second week of the Autumn Term. The Reception school day begins at 8.50am and ends at 3.20pm.

Areas of Learning

The EYFS curriculum is based on observations of children's needs, interests and stages of development. In partnership with parents and carers, the school promotes children's learning and development to ensure they are ready for the next stage of their education.

There are seven areas of learning and development that shape educational programmes in the EYFS. These are divided into two categories: Prime Areas and Specific Areas. Whilst separated for planning purposes, they are interconnected and equally important.

The three Prime Areas are particularly important in supporting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, building their capacity to learn, and helping them to form positive relationships and thrive:

Communication and Language

- Listening, Attention and Understanding
- Speaking

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- Self-Regulation
- Managing Self
- Building Relationships

Physical Development

- Gross Motor Skills
- Fine Motor Skills

The four Specific Areas provide opportunities for children to strengthen and apply the Prime Areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

The EYFS Framework sets out educational programmes for each area of learning. At Havannah First School, these are delivered through a broad, balanced and engaging curriculum, incorporating both adult-led and child-initiated learning opportunities. Meaningful experiences are carefully planned to build knowledge, develop skills and extend children's language and vocabulary.

We strongly value and promote outdoor learning in the EYFS. Children have access to a dedicated outdoor learning environment as well as the wider school grounds throughout the year and in all weathers. We believe that learning outdoors is just as important as learning indoors. The outdoor environment provides valuable opportunities for physical development, creativity, exploration, collaboration and problem-solving, while supporting children's emotional health and wellbeing.

Activities and learning opportunities are planned with regard to the three Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning:

- **Playing and Exploring** – children investigate and experience things and 'have a go'.
- **Active Learning** – children concentrate, persevere when they encounter difficulties and enjoy their achievements.
- **Creating and Thinking Critically** – children develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

Practice in the EYFS is underpinned by the four overarching principles of the EYFS: every child is unique, children learn through positive relationships, children learn and develop well in enabling environments, and children develop and learn at different rates.

Planning and Teaching

Our EYFS curriculum sets out the knowledge, skills and experiences we want children to acquire throughout their Reception year and reflects the whole-school curriculum intent. The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development; therefore, language acquisition and vocabulary development are prioritised throughout the curriculum.

The curriculum is ambitious, carefully sequenced and informed by the EYFS Framework. Planning is based on children's needs, interests and stages of development, ensuring that all children make progress from their individual starting points. Reception staff plan collaboratively around engaging topics and high-quality core texts, whilst remaining responsive to children's interests and emerging needs. A balance of whole-class teaching, small-group adult-led activities and child-initiated learning ensures that children receive both direct instruction and opportunities to apply their learning independently. Where children have additional needs, appropriate support and adaptations are provided in partnership with families and external agencies where necessary.

Children learn through play, first-hand experiences, adult modelling, guided learning and direct teaching. At Havannah First School, we recognise play as a fundamental vehicle for learning and development. Through play, children explore ideas, solve problems, develop creativity and build confidence as independent learners.

Teachers make effective use of both the indoor and outdoor learning environments, providing rich continuous and enhanced provision. Continuous provision offers children consistent opportunities to revisit, practise and embed skills across all areas of learning, while enhancements are carefully planned in response to children's interests, assessments and next steps. Provision is adapted throughout the year to provide appropriate support, challenge and opportunities for deeper learning for all children.

Phonics and Early Reading

At Havannah First School, we believe that all children can become fluent, confident readers. Reading is at the heart of our curriculum, and we are committed to developing a lifelong love of books and stories. We

teach phonics through the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised systematic synthetic phonics programme. Daily phonics lessons begin in Reception and follow the Little Wandle progression to help children build their knowledge of the alphabetic code and develop the skills required for reading and spelling. Children who require additional support participate in Little Wandle keep-up sessions, ensuring they can keep pace with the programme. Children's progress is closely monitored through ongoing assessment and half-termly Little Wandle assessments. Children take part in Little Wandle reading practice sessions twice each week using fully decodable books matched to their secure phonic knowledge. These sessions focus on the key reading skills of decoding, prosody and comprehension.

We aim to foster a love of reading by immersing children in high-quality texts, storytelling and meaningful literacy experiences. Carefully chosen core texts and books from our reading spine support learning across the curriculum and expose children to a rich range of language and literature. Each classroom provides an inviting reading environment that encourages children to read for pleasure. Children who need additional support are provided with further opportunities to read with adults. Our Year 4 Reading Ambassadors and parent volunteers also help to promote reading and provide extra reading practice. Decodable reading books are sent home weekly, alongside a reading-for-pleasure book to share with family members.

The Teaching of Writing in Reception

At Havannah First School, we develop children as writers through direct teaching and meaningful opportunities to write across the curriculum. Writing begins as soon as children start Reception and is given a high priority throughout the school day. We recognise that successful writing depends upon secure foundations in communication and language, physical development and early reading.

Initially, the emphasis is on developing transcription skills, including pencil control, fine motor development, letter formation and early spelling. Handwriting is taught regularly and systematically to ensure correct letter formation becomes automatic. As children's confidence grows, they are supported to write words, phrases and simple sentences independently. We recognise that writing composition is closely linked to language development. Children are encouraged to share, rehearse and elaborate on their ideas orally before recording them in writing. They are taught to and encouraged to speak in sentences, build vocabulary and orally compose simple sentences in preparation for writing.

In Reception, we use Drawing Club to foster creativity, imagination, vocabulary development and storytelling. Through high-quality picture books, traditional tales and animations, children are immersed in rich language experiences that provide meaningful contexts for drawing, mark making and early writing. During the Spring and Summer terms, writing is further supported through high-quality texts and the principles of Talk for Writing, enabling children to learn, retell and innovate stories before creating their own. Writing opportunities are carefully planned within both adult-led and child-initiated learning. Teachers use ongoing assessment to respond to children's interests, needs and next steps, ensuring all children are supported and challenged to make progress in their writing development.

Literacy Provision:

- Each classroom provides a well-organised writing area containing a range of resources to support mark making, drawing and writing, including paper, notebooks, clipboards, whiteboards, pencils, pens, alphabet resources and vocabulary prompts. Resources are accessible to enable children to write independently across the learning environment.

- Opportunities for storytelling, role play and language development are available through puppets, small world provision and role-play areas.
- A range of activities are provided to develop children's fine and gross motor skills, supporting the physical foundations required for writing.
- Each classroom has an inviting book/reading area with a wide selection of high-quality texts that are regularly updated to promote reading for pleasure.
- Displays celebrate children's achievements, value their contributions and support current learning through the use of images, captions, vocabulary and examples of children's work.
- Daily phonics and literacy sessions are delivered alongside adult-led and child-initiated learning opportunities. High-quality core texts are used to inspire learning and provide meaningful contexts for reading, speaking and writing.
- Children are provided with regular opportunities to apply and develop their transcription, composition and handwriting skills through both independent and guided writing activities. Written outcomes are recorded in writing, handwriting and phonics books, while significant examples of child-initiated learning are captured through Tapestry.
- Daily morning tasks provide opportunities to develop fine motor control, letter formation, handwriting fluency and early transcription skills.

The Teaching of Maths in Reception

Mathematics is embedded throughout the daily routine in Reception through practical activities, counting opportunities and the use of mathematical language. In addition, children take part in two daily whole-class mathematics sessions and regular small-group activities to provide appropriate support and challenge.

Mathematics Provision:

- We use White Rose Maths and NCETM Mastering Number materials to support planning and teaching, ensuring children develop a secure understanding of number, pattern, shape, space and measure.
- Mathematical learning is delivered through a mastery approach, enabling children to develop deep understanding, fluency, reasoning and problem-solving skills.
- Numicon is introduced from the start of Reception to support children's understanding of number and numerical relationships.
- Each classroom provides accessible mathematical resources, including number lines, visual representations and practical equipment to encourage independent exploration and application of mathematical concepts.
- Mathematical challenges are incorporated within continuous provision, enabling children to apply their learning independently through investigation, problem-solving and play.
- Opportunities for active mathematical learning are provided both indoors and outdoors through planned activities and enhanced provision.

Inclusion and Our School Values

At Havannah First School, every child is valued as an individual, regardless of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We are committed to providing an inclusive environment where all children feel safe, respected and able to achieve their full potential. Our EYFS curriculum is planned to meet the needs of individual children and supports them to learn and develop at their own pace.

Positive relationships are at the heart of our Havannah First School family. We value every member of our school community and promote the values of respect, tolerance, understanding and cooperation. Our curriculum is underpinned by our core values of Challenge, Equality and Opportunity, ensuring that all children have access to rich learning experiences and opportunities to succeed.

Through play and exploration, children develop their understanding of the world and learn how to work and play alongside others. Staff model positive relationships and support children in understanding and following our school Golden Rules, helping to create a happy, safe and welcoming environment.

We are proud to be a No Outsiders School, where diversity is celebrated and inclusion is actively promoted. Children learn about different families, cultures, experiences and communities through carefully chosen texts, stories and learning experiences that help them understand and value differences while recognising what we all have in common.

Our Havannah Heroes help children develop positive learning behaviours and personal qualities. Through building knowledge and skills, being creative, resilient and understanding themselves and others, children develop confidence, perseverance, collaboration, reflection, curiosity and independence. We foster high expectations and high self-esteem, encouraging children to take risks, embrace challenges and become confident, independent learners.

Safeguarding

At Havannah First School, we recognise that children learn best when they are healthy, safe, secure and valued. Promoting children's wellbeing is central to all that we do. We encourage children to express their views and feelings and ensure that they feel listened to and respected. Positive relationships with trusted adults help children to feel safe, develop confidence and thrive in their learning.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All staff receive regular safeguarding training and work closely with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and wider safeguarding team to ensure that any concerns regarding a child's welfare are identified, recorded and acted upon promptly. Our safeguarding and child protection procedures are detailed within the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

The safety of children is further supported through robust risk assessment procedures. Risk assessments are carried out for educational visits, the indoor and outdoor learning environments and other aspects of school life. Where appropriate, individual risk assessments are developed for children whose needs or circumstances may require additional support to ensure their safety and wellbeing. We also adhere to all relevant school policies, including those relating to intimate care, positive handling, attendance, online safety, safer eating and health and safety.

Safer Eating and Nutrition

At Havannah First School, we are committed to promoting children's health, wellbeing and safety through the provision of healthy, balanced and nutritious food and drink. We recognise that snack and lunchtime routines support children's physical development, communication skills, independence and social interaction. Fresh drinking water is available throughout the day, and all food provided reflects current healthy eating guidance and the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Before children start Reception, information regarding dietary requirements, food allergies, intolerances, cultural preferences and medical needs is obtained from parents and carers and recorded appropriately. Where necessary, individual allergy action plans are developed in partnership with families and health professionals, shared with relevant staff and reviewed regularly. Staff are trained to recognise the signs and symptoms of allergic reactions and anaphylaxis and understand the procedures to follow in an emergency.

Children are closely supervised during snack and mealtimes to promote safe eating practices and minimise the risk of choking. A member of staff with a current Paediatric First Aid qualification is always present whenever Reception children are eating. Food is prepared and presented appropriately, and children are encouraged to sit safely while eating and drinking. Mealtimes are organised to provide a calm, well-supervised environment that supports children's safety, wellbeing and enjoyment.

We view mealtimes as valuable opportunities for learning and relationship building. Staff encourage children to develop independence, make healthy choices, practise good manners and engage in positive conversations. Through close partnership with parents and carers, we strive to ensure that every child can eat safely, confidently and inclusively within our school community.

Sleep and Rest Arrangements

As a Reception setting, we recognise that children may occasionally require a period of rest during the school day. Where appropriate, a quiet, comfortable space will be provided to support children's wellbeing and individual needs. Any child requiring regular rest or sleep during the school day will be supported in partnership with parents and carers, with arrangements agreed to meet their individual needs. Staff will ensure that children are appropriately supervised at all times and that current safer sleep guidance is followed where sleep provision is required. The wellbeing, safety and comfort of the child will remain paramount in all decisions regarding rest and sleep arrangements.

Screen Use and Technology

At Havannah First School, we recognise that technology is an important part of children's lives and can enhance learning when used thoughtfully and purposefully. In Reception, technology is used to support creativity, communication, problem-solving and digital literacy through activities such as using interactive whiteboards, programmable toys, and age-appropriate educational software on iPads. Technology is integrated into learning experiences where it adds value and supports children's understanding of the world around them.

We are committed to providing a play-based, language-rich curriculum in which direct interaction with adults, hands-on experiences, outdoor learning and collaborative play remain the primary means of learning. Screen use is carefully planned, age-appropriate and balanced with opportunities for physical activity, social interaction and exploration. Screens are not used as a form of entertainment or behaviour management. Staff model positive and responsible technology use and support children in developing the knowledge and skills needed to use technology safely and confidently. In line with EYFS guidance, Havannah First School has regard to current recommendations on screen use and seeks to promote healthy digital habits in partnership with families.

Assessment

Assessment plays an important role in helping us to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, plan appropriate learning experiences and identify where additional support may be required. We work closely with parents and carers and keep them informed about their child's learning and development throughout the year.

Assessment in the EYFS is primarily formative. Staff observe, interact with and support children during their learning to develop an understanding of their achievements, interests and next steps. This information is used to inform future planning and ensure that learning experiences meet the needs of individual children. As children's needs and interests develop, the learning environment and provision are adapted to support their ongoing progress.

Observations and assessments are recorded using Tapestry, our online learning journal. Every child has an individual assessment portfolio, which includes Tapestry observations and examples of work from phonics, handwriting and writing activities. Parents and carers have access to Tapestry and are encouraged to contribute observations and celebrate achievements from home, creating a shared picture of their child's learning journey.

At the end of Reception, children are assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELGs) that make up the seven areas of learning and development. Throughout the year, teachers monitor children's progress towards these goals. At the end of the EYFS, teachers complete the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP), which is shared with parents and carers and passed on to Year 1 teachers to support a smooth transition and ensure continuity in learning.

Partnership with Parents/Carers

At Havannah First School, we value the important role that parents and carers play in their child's learning and development. By working closely together, we can support children to flourish both in school and at home. We work in partnership with families to share information, celebrate achievements and ensure that every child is supported to reach their full potential.

We value open and positive communication and strive to ensure that parents and carers feel welcomed, listened to and involved in their child's education. We encourage families to share information about their child's interests, achievements and experiences, helping us to build a complete picture of each child's learning and development.

Parents and carers are actively encouraged to participate in their child's learning journey in Reception through:

- Stay and Play sessions
- Contributions to Tapestry learning journals
- Volunteering opportunities and parent workshops
- Termly parents' evenings to discuss children's progress, celebrate achievements and address any questions or concerns

Through these opportunities, we aim to foster a strong sense of belonging, ensuring that families feel valued as part of the Havannah First School community.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy was originally written by Rebecca Storey in November 2021.

The policy will be reviewed every two years, or sooner if changes to statutory guidance, legislation or school practice require it.

Review History

- November 2021 – Policy created
- Summer 2023 – Reviewed
- March 2025 – Reviewed
- October 2025 – Updated
- September 2026 – Updated and reviewed

Approved by: Governing Body

Next Review Date: Autumn 2028